

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 2225

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources & Parks, February 27, 2014

Title: An act relating to the Milwaukee Road corridor.

Brief Description: Concerning the Milwaukee Road corridor.

Sponsors: Representatives Manweller, Senn, Magendanz, Fey, Tharinger, Fitzgibbon and Roberts; by request of Parks and Recreation Commission.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/17/14, 97-0.

Committee Activity: Natural Resources & Parks: 2/25/14, 2/27/14 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Pearson, Chair; Liias, Ranking Member; Dandel, Hargrove, Hewitt, Kline and Parlette.

Staff: Richard Rodger (786-7461)

Background: The Milwaukee Road corridor consists of approximately 213 miles of railroad right-of-way that has been acquired by the state since 1981. In 1984 the state transferred approximately 25 miles of the right-of-way to the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) and other transfers to the Commission have subsequently occurred. The Commission manages the corridor as a non-motorized recreational trail, known as Iron Horse State Park. The trail itself is officially named the John Wayne Pioneer Trail.

The Commission has multiple statutory restrictions and regulations regarding the Milwaukee Road corridor. The Commission is prohibited from allowing motorized vehicles on the trail, except for emergency, law enforcement, or utility vehicles, or those vehicles necessary for maintenance or construction of the trail. The Commission is not allowed to issue permits for temporary linear access by local farmers, potential concession-related activities, and does not allow for other mobility devices as required under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Since 1984 the Commission has acquired and manages four additional rail-trail properties that do not have any statutory restrictions. These properties are managed through a

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combination of master plans, agency licenses, permits and easements, the Commission's existing policies and procedures, and with any limitations imposed by grant funds that were used to purchase or develop the right-of-way. The Commission manages these trails with limited flexibility to permit motor vehicles on the trails if they do not interfere with the principal non-motorized recreation use and if they do not damage the corridor.

Summary of Bill: The statutory provisions regarding the Commission's control and management of the Milwaukee Road corridor are repealed. The Commission must continue to manage the lands in a similar manner as it does for its four other non-statutory, rail-trail properties. Specific use restrictions on the corridor remain based on grant funding requirements, Commission trail policies, and the Iron Horse Master Plan.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Washington State Parks already manages similar rail trails throughout the state. This bill would expand that mandate to include the Milwaukee Road corridor.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Daniel Farber, WA State Parks.